

POST SUPPRESSION EVALUATION  
OF THE  
OUACHITA NATIONAL FOREST

by

James D. Smith<sup>1/</sup>

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this evaluation is to help the forest and districts with southern pine beetle suppression projects evaluate their FY 77 project. It is an attempt to summarize reported accomplishment and to document the successes and problems encountered by the districts while doing SPB suppression work. It is hoped that by reviewing past projects, better decisions can be made concerning project planning, organizing, directing, and controlling. This may also help in future target setting, fund allocation, and accomplishment reporting.

Three districts on the Ouachita National Forest had Southern Pine Beetle Projects in FY 77, (Tiak, Caddo, and Mena Districts). The amount of salvage control targeted was 2,349.0 MBF. This included the project for the Caddo and Mena which was submitted April 1977. The number of stems targeted to be chemically treated was 9,800. The total amount of project funding was \$72,028. This funding was received for use by the Ouachita National Forest in June 1977 (5200-10 dated 2/22/77). Table 1 contains a comparison of project targets versus reported accomplishments.

Target Setting and Insect and Disease Management Reporting System (IDARS) -

Project Proposals were submitted for each Forest where SPB was expected to be a problem. Salvage control (MBF), chemical control (stems), and presuppression (acres) targets were set up based on current entomological knowledge. Although some estimates can be made, SPB activity cannot be accurately predicted a year in advance. For this reason, the estimated targets may not reflect what actually happened on a forest during the project year.

The project took into account funding for presuppression flights, chemical control, salvage control, and indirect services of the Supervisor's Office. When the reported accomplishment figures do not match the targets set forth in the Project, it may be due to a change in SPB activity over the course of the year, to inconsistencies in

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<sup>1/</sup> Entomologist, USFS, SA, S&PF, Forest Insect and Disease Management, Group, Pineville, LA 71360.

Table 1. Project accomplishments as reported on IDARS

Target Areas	Tiak	Mena	Caddo	TOTAL
Stems chemically treated	3,225	30	--	3,255
Pulp converted to MBF	1.91844	None reported	None reported	
Salvage MBF	448.69	17.20	22.70	489.50
Presuppression acres	559,000	None reported	423,000	
Totals:		Project targets	Data as reported on IDARS	
Funding*		\$ 43,378	28,494	
Salvage		2,349.0 MBF	489.50 MBF	
Chemical treated		9,800 Stems	3,255 Stems	
Presuppression acres		386,000	982,000	

\* Note: All figures are as reported by IDARS.

Funds turned back into the Region amount to \$12,804. The funding figure in the table above represents the amount that actually was available to the districts - not the total project figure (5200-10, dated 2/22/77). Original project funding was \$72,028.

accomplishment reporting, or to districts not able to get the work done. Some reasons for not accomplishing the work include inoperability, poor markets, few operators, late funding and district commitment to do the work.

Project accomplishment is reported on IDARS. These forms are designed to show how SPB control work is being accomplished on a monthly basis. If accomplishment reporting problems become apparent, FI&DM should give adequate training to insure that districts know how to report project accomplishment correctly.

#### Funding -

The Ouachita National Forest received funding late (June 1977) in the year. This delay caused some loss of salvage control efficiency. The districts could not use the funding to best advantage in the time that they had (June - October 1) to use it. More responsive action is needed to provide funding so that it can be used to maximum effectiveness throughout the SPB season.

#### Weather -

A colder than normal winter has helped to reduce the SPB to some extent. Chronic populations existed on the Mena and Caddo Districts. Most of this population was in lightning strikes. Larger populations were present on the Tiak District.

#### Market Conditions -

Market conditions on the Ouachita District were varied in FY 77. The Mena and Caddo Districts had a limited market for pulpwood found in the small spots. Usually one or two small volume operators handled the salvage control for each district. The Tiak District has had some problems with the pulpwood market. This has been offset by the use of chemicals to achieve control when salvage was not possible.

#### Operator Reliability -

Caddo - This district sold a small volume of salvage control timber. As a consequence, the District personnel have had the opportunity to observe the operators and train them as necessary. Overall operator efficiency was observed to be excellent. Very little slash was left in the woods and no merchantable material was found to be left.

Mena - This district sold mostly small volumes. Most of the salvage operators on the district were small volume business men. Usually, the spot size was three trees or less. The operators usually move

the salvage material quickly. Two spots were observed which had been salvaged. An excellent job of using merchantable material and leaving as little slash as possible was done. Overall operator efficiency was observed to be excellent.

Tiak - The Tiak District sold more salvage control volume than any other district on the National Forest. There were more operators on this district. This was probably because the average spot size salvaged was larger here than the other districts.

#### Personnel -

The Tiak District is the only district that had a need to hire temporary people for a chemical control crew. Delay in funding the district for SPB control contributed to less work being done than was planned.

#### Unit Plans -

Insect and disease prevention will be addressed in the Ouachita Timber Management Plan and Unit Plans with actual implementation scheduled to begin in FY 78.

#### Timber Sales -

Most of the spots were small, the sales were usually under \$2,000. The Caddo and the Mena did not have a competitive market for pulpwood. Two or three operators on each district handled the majority of pulpwood salvage. These spots were usually controlled in 10 - 12 days. In larger spots (primarily Tiak District) the market was competitive, and salvage was accomplished with short notice sales. The time to control these larger spots was usually 15 - 20 working days.

#### Conclusion -

Late funding in FY 77 made impossible much of the planned SPB work. Breakouts have not been a problem due to the district personnel doing the post suppression checks. The overall control effort in FY 77 was satisfactory considering the time from funding to job completion (4 months).

It should be noted here that the success of a SPB control project is determined by the Post Control checks. Districts which make the effort to do this properly greatly increase the efficiency of their work. Preventative measures will be initiated in FY 78 as specified by Unit and Timber Management Plans.

The IDARS reporting form is used to provide data concerning the project. Accurate reporting is necessary in order to keep abreast of what is actually happening on each project district. FI&DM will

give training sessions as needed to insure that the people responsible for reporting on the IDARS form understand the IDARS system. This will also help to minimize errors on future reports.

As Unit Plans are formulated, FI&DM is available to assist in planning for long term insect and disease management. This planning is essential for the implementation of preventative measures. It is also desirable when direct control of Forest pests must be considered for sensitive areas (campgrounds, etc.).

It should be noted here that the success of a SPB control effort depends on the post suppression check. Districts which make the effort to do this properly greatly increase the efficiency of their work.